



Aedes Christi
in Academia Oxoniensi.




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Since the former Impression of this Book, meting with the Judgment and Opinion of a great Statesman, in the Reign of King Henry VIII. and his Vice-Roy in Ireland, Sir Anthony St. Leiger by Name (who used to say, That there were three things would settle a State or Kingdom, 1st. Good God fathers and God-mothers performing their Vows. 2dly, Good Housholders overlooking their Families. 3dly, Good School-masters Educating of Youth. And this last the most useful, although the most contemptible.) I am the more encouraged to a Second Impression of the same, hoping it may somewhat contribute to the same good End before-mentioned; which is the hearty Prayers of the Author.

A
New-Years Gift :
OR,
A D V I C E
TO A
G O D - S O N .

Train up a Child in the way
he should go, and when he
is old he will not depart
from it, *Prov. 22. 6.*

*Religio est omnium moralium
Virtutum nobilissima.*

The Second Edition,

By P. A. Gent.

L O N D O N , Printed by J. L. for
Iuke Meredith, at the Star in
St. Paul's Church-Yard, 1696.

IMPRIMATUR,

Liber cui Titulus [A
New-Years Gift; or
Advice to a God son.]

Nov. 26.
1687.

Guil. Needham

TO THE
Hopeful young Gentleman
T. C. Esquire.

[A
; or
son.
ham

THE serious consideration
of the dreadful danger
to mens souls by reason
of vicious and sinful Customs
and Habits contracted in youth,
which being confirmed by a long
continuance in a debauched course
of Life, renders their Conver-
sion and Reformation very diffi-
cult, if not next to impossible, as
the Prophet speaks, Jer. xiiij. 23.
Can the Æthiopian change his
skin, or the Leopard his spots?
then may ye also do good, that
are accustomed to do evil;
made me sensible, that the only

way to prevent this great Mischiefe must be by engaging Persons betimes in their young and tender Years, in Vertue and true Goodness, by means of religious and prudent Education, Instruction and Advice: And therefore I conceived it not to be besides my Duty (next to my own Children) to indeavour to prevent this Evil and Danger falling upon my only God-son now remaining alive, and capable of Advice, and that therein (I acting within my own Province) it could not be imputed to me as a Crime. But, Sir, now seeing this Discourse is likely to be made more publick than was at first intended, I could not well find out one more suitable, to whom to dedicate it, than your self, who are a Gentleman of such great Hopes, as to be in time,

Dedicatory.

7

time, one of the Vertuosi of the Age you live in; who, I doubt not, will make it your Study and Care, by your Life and Conversation, to refute that bold Assertion of him who once said, O virtus, quæsiui te ut rem, sed tantum merum nomen es! For certainly there is true Gold in the World, although there is a great deal of counterfeit Metal like it. I shall say no more, least it may prove Offensive to you, whose Care, I verily believe, will be to be rather Good than Great; who will have a greater Desire to be useful in your Generation to serve your Prince and Country, than to be talk'd of in the World. Thus heartily wishing to you the Completion of all Happiness, which only consists in a religious and vertuous Life here, and at Death to be made

A 4

more

8 The Epistle, &c.

*more Happy; translated hence
into heavenly Mansions, those
Receptacles of Vertuous, Noble
and Purified Souls, in the high-
est Heavens, there to be taken
up with the holy and excellent
Impliments of the blessed Angels,
for evermore: I am,*

S I R,

Your affectionate Friend

and humble Servant,

*Decemb. 10.
1687.*

P. A.

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A
New-Years Gift:
 OR,
A D V I C E
T O A
G O D - S O N.

God son,

IN regard you have own'd
 me your God-father, I
 think therefore you do
 not doubt but that I per-
 formed that Office for you in
 the Face of the Christian Con-
 gregation. So that if that kind
 of Right and Interest I have

A 5

in

10 *A New-Years Gift:*

in you, do it not, yet at least, the Obligation of Christian Duty, puts me upon this present Trouble of tendering to you my Christian Advice and Counsel; which being out of my Love to you, I hope it will not be ungrateful and unpleasing; (for none but ill Natures can be so unworthy, as to reject the Advices of an affectionate Friend.) You are to know, Godson, That I was your *Proxie* in your place and stead, to answer for you, (you being not able to answer for your self) *That you did renounce the Devil and all his Works, the Pomps and Vanities of this wicked World, the sinful Lusts of the Flesh: That you did believe all the Articles of the Christian Faith; And that you would keep God's holy Will and*
Command-

or, *Advice to a God-son.* II

Commandments, and walk in the same all the Days of your Life, as you have acknowledged in your Catechism, in which I was instrumental, in the solemn Dedication of you to God and his Service, to be the Disciple of the ever blessed Jesus; to your Entrance upon your holy Christian Profession, and the initiating you in his holy Catholick Church, of which the present Church of *England* is a Part; in which Church you being born, were baptized. Now, God son, although I question not, but by the Christian Care of your Parents, you have been already instructed in the First Principles of your holy Religion contained in our Church-Catechism (who, doubtless are no less obliged to promote your Christianity, than if
you

12 *A New-Years Gift :*

you had had no God-fathers and God-mothers :) But nevertheless it many times falls out, that our Parents are remiss and negligent herein, therefore our Mother, the Church of *England*, hath strictly imposed this Duty of catechising and instructing all young Persons her Children, in their Christianity, upon all her Priests and Ministers. Therefore for your Welfare, God-son, after my hearty Prayers to God for you, give me leave, with Freedom and Earnestness, to exhort you to account this happy Privilege of your Christianity, to be the greatest Blessing and Happiness that a Man or Woman (born into the World) are capable of; for the Gospel, or glad Tidings of Salvation by Jesus Christ, was the great Redemption
tion

tion and Happiness to a sinful, degenerate and miserable World: Now you must know, God son, That God (having created Man) made a Covenant and Agreement with him, to this purpose; That if he continued in Obedience to God, That both that Knowledge of his Duty, and that Strength of Soul and Mind he then enjoyed (in his Estate of Innocency and Happiness) should be continued to him, and that he should never die, but be happy for ever: But on the other side, if he sinn'd and disobeyed God, then both he and all his Posterity should lose that Knowledge, and that perfect Strength, and be subject to Death, both Temporal and Eternal. But our First Parent *Adam* disobeyeth God, and so brings

14 *A New-Years Gift:*

brings a Curse on himself and all his Posterity, (they losing both their Knowledge of, and Strength to perform their Duty; being both ignorant and weak, having a Backwardness to all Good, and an Aptness to all Evil) and also Death Temporal and Eternal at last. All Mankind being now in this miserable Condition of Bondage and Slavery, to Sin and Satan, Death and Hell; God was pleased to make a Second Covenant of Grace and Mercy with lost Man, and therein promises to send his Son (that Seed of the Woman which should break the Serpents Head) who should be a King, Priest, and Prophet to us: A King to rule us, a Priest to make an Atonement for us with his Father, and to intercede for us;
and

or, Advice to a God-son. 15

and a Prophet to teach and instruct us in all things necessary to our Happiness, in the whole Will and Mind of God. Accordingly the Blessed Jesus, in fulness of Time was sent into the World from Heaven, to take our Nature upon him, to become Man, and so in our stead, as our Surety, then paid the Price of our Redemption, by shedding his most precious Blood upon the Cross, offering up his Soul, a Sacrifice to God, to satisfy his Father's Justice, (of which great Sacrifice all the legal Sacrifices were Types, and as such were acceptable with God, for he was the Lamb of God slain from the Beginning of the World) and by this means to reconcile us to God, to procure to us the sinful Offspring of sinful *Adam* (upon our true Repen-

16 *A New-Years Gift :*

Repentance) a Pardon of all our Sins: (For he purchased a general Pardon to all the Rebellious Sons of *Adam*, upon their Submission and laying down their Arms, and ceasing their Hostilities against Heaven, and becoming dutiful and obedient Subjects) and of the Servants of Sin and Slaves of Satan (the greatest Slavery in the World) to be made the Sons and Servants of God (whose Service is perfect Freedom) to be in some Measure restored to their first State of Innocence and Happiness, to be made vertuous and holy, conformed to the Image of their heavenly Father; to enjoy his Friendship and Favour, and to be blessed by him here in this Life, and at Death to be translated into the blessed Regions of

or, Advice to a God-son. 17

of Happiness above in Heaven; there to behold, love, contemplate, praise and admire Him to all Eternity, with all his holy Angels.

Now, consider seriously, God-son, Was not this great Love and good Will of God, in this great Contrivance and Work of our Redemption? And in his sending his beloved Son into the World for the effecting the same? And was it not also great Love and condescending Goodness in the Son of God, the blessed Jesus, to stoop from Heaven to Earth, to take upon him the Nature of sinful Man? To be born of a Woman, to live here upon Earth a mean and despicable Life, to be hated, reviled, persecuted (even while he went about designing and doing all the Good he could,

18 *A New-Years Gift:*

could, both to the Bodies and Souls of Men, and publishing the glad Tydings of Salvation to all the World, and by his divine Doctrine rectifying the great Errors, Mistakes and Delusions that the World lay under making a clear and full Discovery of what was Truth, and being the great Exemplar of all Vertue Holiness, true Worth and Goodness to all the World,) Being, notwithstanding, herein exposed to all the Malice and Rage of Men and Devils: And at last to lay down his precious Life by a shameful, ignominious, painful and cruel Death of Crucifixion: Hereby perfecting the Work of our Redemption; That whosoever would accept of this Salvation, and would believe in him, repent and be baptized, and so become

become his faithful Disciple, should be saved.

Now, God-son, you being happily born of Christian Parents, were according to the holy Institution of this blessed Jesus our Lord and Master, and the constant Practice of his Church, baptized, and thereby initiated in his Church, and made a Member of the same (as I mentioned before) and so made not only capable of, but really partaker of this great Redemption and Salvation. It very much concerns you, now you are come to a competent Age of Understanding, to consider how you stand obliged to God, and to be true and faithful to your baptismal Vow and Covenant, which now you must renew in your own Person (except you will renounce

renounce your Christianity) and think that you were obliged also to them who were assistant and instrumental in this charitable Work of bringing you to this holy Baptism, and devoting and dedicating you to God, and to be the Disciple of the blessed Jesus Christ, you being thereby Partaker of all the Privileges and Benefits of the Gospel. Now I beseech you, with all Chearfulness and Alacrity of Soul, resolve forthwith to ratify and confirm this Advantageous Contract and Vow, made for you (by your God-fathers and God-mothers) in your Minority and Nonage, and perform the same in your own Person, now you are of Capacity, and abhor to profess, what you do not intend to practise.

In pursuance thereof be modest,

dest, and humble, and teachable, Be very sollicitous to know and understand fully what your Christianity means, and also what it requires of you: And abhor to be of the Number of them (too many in the World) who neglect that most where- in their chiefeft and greatest Care should be, *viz.* Their Religion; and by that means know little more of their Christianity but the Name.

First therefore, God-son, have recourse, with humble Reverence of Heart and Body, to God in Prayer, and with great Fervency beg the Guidance of his Grace and Spirit, wherein your blessed Lord and Saviour hath furnished you with the most excellent Form composed by himself, which should be a Pattern to all our Prayers,
and

22 *A New-Years Gift :*

and always to accompany them: But herein also your Mother the Church hath furnished you, as also other pious Men, especially that most excellent Book, the *whole Duty of Man*, which, now I have mentioned to you, let me recommend it to you as an Attendant to the sacred Scriptures, in which, in the next place, I would advise you to be very Conversant, I mean the Scriptures, with a spiritual Guide to direct you, and take you by the Hand, especially in doubtful and difficult places, and hearkening to good Sermons, and the learning and understanding the Principles of your Religion, contained in our Church Catechism; in which you should request your Parents and Friends to assist and help you.

And

And consider, God-son, Whereas in your Baptismal Vow you renounced *The Devil and all his Works, the Poms and Vanities of this wicked World, and all the sinful Lusts of the Flesh*, That is to say, all Acts of Sin and Disobedience to the Divine Laws (for Sin is the Transgression of God's Law) as also all the vain and evil Customs of the World, the Pride, Excess and Vanity of worldly and wicked Men, together with the gratifying of your carnal and sensual Desires and Appetites, in opposition to those Restrictions and Rules God hath set us. And whereas, in the next place, you promise to believe all the Articles of the Christian Faith, briefly summed up in the Apostles Creed, in which is comprehended

24 *A New-Years Gift:*

prehended the Knowledge and Belief of all those Truths of Christianity, necessary to be known by us, to be the Guide of our Lives, it being the Foundation of all Christian Practice. It is very needful to have your Mind well instructed therein: For without this Foundation be well laid, the Superstructure thereupon can never stand, but will come to nothing; Ignorance herein is the Mother of Error: He that understands amiss, concludes worse, and Error is endless, as one speaks, and as Dr. *Sibs* long since well observed, *Whosoever is corrupt in Faith, is corrupt in Obedience in that Degree. Evil Opinions breed evil Life:* For as Truth is from above, the Offspring of God, so Error is from beneath from the great Deceiver, the
 Father

or, *Advice to a God-son.* 25

Father of Lyes the Devil). *Therefore nothing is so much worth as a Mind well instructed, saith the Son of Syrach, Eccles. 26. 14.*

And Mistakes in things of Religion are of most dreadful Danger to you, wherefore it very much concerns you to be well instructed with good and sound Principles: True Piety being the Consequent of a sound and orthodox Faith. And whereas you promise to keep God's holy Will and Commandments, and therein to persist to your Lives end: It is most necessary you should know them and their true Sence and Meaning, that so you may avoid the Ill they forbid, and do the Good they command you, which are briefly, yet fully contained in the Exposition

B

ser

26 *A New-Years Gift:*

set down in your Catechism, which deserves your frequent and serious Consideration.

And as soon as convenient Opportunity is offered have Recourse to Confirmation by the Hands of the Bishop, there to renew solemnly your baptismal Vow and Covenant, and receive the Benefit of the Prayers of the Congregation, and of his Prayers and Blessing also. For as a worthy Divine observes, When Men have solemnly addicted themselves to the Christian Religion, and made it their own Act by a voluntary and publick Choice, it will ordinarily have a great Influence upon them in Modesty, Honour and Reputation as well as Conscience, that they shall not easily go back from it and renounce it.

And

or, Advice to a God-son. 27

And if you have not a convenient Opportunity for Confirmation, take the greater Care to fit your self the sooner for the holy Sacrament of the Body and Blood of our Saviour, and there renew solemnly you baptismal Vow and Covenant, and as soon as you have so renewed your Covenant and Vow, either at Confirmation or at receiving the Sacrament, I would advise you to enter it down in Writing in your Bible, or some other Book of Devotions and Prayers, in which you are often, if not daily conversant: In Manner following.

B *E it remembered that I*
did this

Day of Anno Domini

16 *solemnly renew my baptismal Vow and Covenant with*

B 2

God

28 *A New-Years Gift:*

God, and did then seriously devote and resign up my self to his Service, from which, I am resolved, by his Grace, never to depart, but to persist in the same, and be a faithful Disciple of my dear Saviour unto my Lives end; in Witness whereof (and that I may be mindful of it, and not forget it) I have here set down the same, and subscribed my Name.

And then subscribe your Name thereunto: And often afterwards have recourse to this Contract, Vow and Covenant you have made with God, and consider it seriously, and often renew it at the holy Sacrament, as also at convenient times read both the Church Office and Prayers at Baptism, and at Confirmation.

But

But here let me advise you to have a great Care that your religious Warmth and early Seriousness, do not carry you beyond the plain and known Measures of your Duty. Let your baptismal Vow, your Duty to God and your Neighbour, as set down in the Catechism, be chiefly in your Mind, and suffer not your self (mark it and remember) I say, suffer not your self to devise some new and particular Rules to your self, which, in your Zeal, you'll be apt to think necessary, and then be ready to tie your self up by a solemn Vow to observe them. This Forwardness in making Vows is ordinary in all beginners in Religion, and especially in young People. And such Vows (which are no part of Duty, but proceed usually

30 *A New-Years Gift:*

from too much Heat, and too little Consideration: I have heard, to become afterwards great Snares to those who made them, robbing them of the Comforts of sincere Indeavours to keep a good Conscience, by being brought under an Obligation, which they had better have avoided, of doing such and such particular Acts of Religion, and with such Circumstances as in themselves are not necessary, and perhaps not convenient for them, when their own Condition of Life is altered, nay, perhaps were not so when they made their Vow. This I the rather caution you against, both for the Reason above mentioned, That I conceive an early Piety is very apt to lead you this way; and because I have heard some, whose
Scruples

Scruples have been so great upon the breaking of these Vows, and coming short of that Strictness and height of Religion in those particular Tasks which they had imposed upon themselves, as to be ready to fall into Despair: Whereas had their Souls been free from such a Bondage, they would have made great Progress in virtuous Living, and not have wanted the unspeakable Comfort of a good Conscience. Wherefore I advise you heartily that in all these Religious Warmths, you never bind up your self by any hasty Vows, but consult your spiritual Guide, and take his Directions. For such Assistance is every whit as necessary for the well governing our Fits of Heat, as it is for curing our Coldness in the

32 *A New-Years Gift :*

Duties of Religion. And do not think my Advice in these Matters to be needles or superfluous: For Religion is the grand Concern of our Lives, and therefore not to be trifled and played with, as (it is to be feared) most do among us now a-days in the World. I hope I need not use many Arguments or Motives to perswade you to that which is the grand Concern of your Life, and in which consists your greatest Interest and Advantage. I need not use many Words to perswade you to be an honest Man, and to be as good as your Word, as your solemn Vow and Oath made to God. I hope you will say with holy David, *Psal. 101. 4. I hate the sin of Unfaithfulness, there shall no such thing cleave*

unto me ; and when your faithfulness herein, is to be true to your own highest and greatest Interest and Advantage. Further, consider seriously the Worth and Excellency of the Rules and Precepts of the Christian Religion ; which, in short, you know, is, the loving God with all our Hearts and Minds, with all our Souls, and with all our Strength. And in the next place, loving our Neighbours as our selves, as you are taught in our Church Catechism. Now one would think there should need no Argument to perswade you to be in Love with God, the most excellent, amiable, soul-satisfying Object in the World, the greatest and most resplendent Beauty you can ever have your Mind fixed upon in the whole

34 *A New-Years Gift:*

Universe; yea, *The Beauty of all the Beauties and Excellencies in the World*, Wisdom 13. 3. For the first Author of Beauty hath created them: And as the Prophet *Zachariah* speak *Zach. 9. 17.* *How great is his Goodness, and how great is his Beauty?* And as the Author of the Book of *Wisdom*, Chap. 11. Verse 23, 24, 26. sets forth the Goodness and Excellency of God. *But thou* (saith he) *hast Mercy upon all, and winkest at the Sins of Men, because they should amend: for thou lovest all things that are, and abhorrest nothing which thou hast made. How could any thing have endured if it had not been thy Will, or been preserved by thee? But thou sparest all, for they are thine, O Lord, thou lover of Souls.* Now if under the Law
God

or, Advice to a God-son. 35

God appeared so good and Gracious, that he was stiled the Lover of Souls, how Resplendent and Illustrious must needs appear the divine Goodness to us under the Gospel, when God spared not his own Son, but hath given him up for us all, *Rom. 8. 32.* Yea, so loved the World, that he sent his only begotten Son into the World, that whosoever believeth in him should not Perish, but have eternal Life. How should we Christians love God with the strongest and greatest Affections imaginable? And in an ecstasy of Joy loudly proclaim him to be the Lover of Souls indeed; and cry out with holy *David, O love the Lord ye his Saints, &c. Psal. 31. 23.*

In the next place, as to our Neighbour, our Religion teach-

36 *A New-Years Gift :*

es us to do unto all Men, as we would they should do to us; (that is to say) to honour and reverence our Parents, to be Humble towards all our Superiours, to be Loyal and Faithful to our Prince and Sovereign, obedient to his Laws and Government; to submit our selves to all our Governours, Teachers, spiritual Pastors and Masters: To be Just and Honest in all our Dealings, friendly and peaceable towards all our Neighbours; to be Charitable and ready to do all the Good we are able both to the Bodies and Souls of those who stand in need of it: To be Sober, Temperate and Chast, and to follow Peace with all Men, and Holiness: And in respect to the Duties both of the First and Second Table, to follow
the

or, *Advice to a God-son.* 37

the Apostles comprehensive Direction, *Philip. 4. 8. Whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good Report; if there be any Vertue, and if there be any Praise think on these things.* So that this most excellent Religion, must needs make its Votaries the best, the most lovely Persons in all the Earth, even like unto their Lord and Master, the ever blessed Jesus, who himself was the expresse Image of his Father, God blessed for ever: For this is the great End of Religion (as a late Author discourseth) viz. *The purifying and refining the Nature of Man, correcting the wild Exorbitances of Passion and Lust,*
by

38 *A New-Years Gift:*

by which he is so estranged from God, and disabled to arrive at the Life of Vertue and Goodness, it restores us to that primitive State of Happiness that we lost in Adam.

Thus, in short, you have the true Representation of the Christian Religion, than which nothing can be more excellent, as to its Laws and Rules of Life: And altho' it is true, it is a Yoke and Restraint, yet (as our Lord and Master testifies) his Yoke is easy, and his Burthen light. His excellent Religion is not a lowre melancholy Thing, as is falsely represented by ignorant and wicked Men: It is not an Enemy to your Mirth, Pleasure and Delight in this Life (as one hath well observed) *you may Sing, Rejoice and be Merry, God denies*

or, Advice to a God-son. 39

nieth you nothing but Sin, which spoils your Joys and dasheth your Mirth, and sooner or later must be sadly accounted for: As the Pious Mr. George Herbert used to say. Religion doth not banish Mirth, but only moderates and sets Bounds to it; it is the only way to render our Delights pure and real, and satisfactory: For do you imagine that any one can so heartily sing and rejoice as he that hath God his Friend, who lives under the Smiles of Heaven: Indeed it is the Voice of all Men, who will shew us any Good? *Omnes tendunt ad gaudium, sed unde magnum & stabile consequantur ignorant*, saith the Heathen *Seneca*. Every Man would arrive at Joy and Contentment, but how to obtain that which is great, stable and lasting, they know

40 *A New-Years Gift:*

know not. All Men seek Happiness and Satisfaction, and Tranquility of Mind in this Life: Now behold, here it is only to be had, in a vertuous and christian Life; for if we search the whole Universe, where else shall we find it? For we see by daily Experience that when Men have run through all the Felicities this World can afford them, Riches, Honours, Pleasures; at last, when they come to be Wise and Serious at their Deaths, (for Death being a serious thing indeed, it makes them that have played the Fool all their Lives to become then serious & wise :) Then they all (if they have their Senses) loudly proclaim with Solomon, That *all is Vanity and vexation of Spirit*. And as the wise Man discourseth,
Wisdom

or, Advice to a God-son. 41

Wisdom 5. 7, 8, 9. They will say, *We alas! wearied our selves in the Way of Wickedness and Destruction. What hath Pride profited us; Or what good hath Riches with our Vaunting brought us? All these things are passed away like a Shadow, and as a Post that hasteth by, &c. And they repenting and groaning for Anguish of Spirit, shall say within themselves (of the Righteous Man) This is he whom we had sometimes in Derision and a Proverb of Reproach, we Fools accounted his Life Madness, and his End to be without Honour: How is he numbred among the Children of God, and his Lot is among the Saints?* 3, 4, 5. Verses of the same Chapter. But certainly true Happiness, and Satisfaction and Pleasure is to be had
only

42 *A New-Years Gift :*

only in a good, vertuous and christian Life, which leads us to, and fixeth us upon that *summum bonum*, God: A good Conscience being a continual Feast, that only a good Man, a good Christian always carries about him: For as *Solomon* says truly, *God's Ways are Ways of Pleasantness, and all his Paths are Peace*, Prov. 3. 17. A good Christian is the only Man that can with an humble and chearful Confidence look up to God as his almighty Protector and Defender, as his gracious Father, under the Light of whose Countenance he doth every day Rejoice: For as one well observes, Vertue is the Tenure by which we hold of Heaven, without this we are but as Out-laws, who cannot claim Protection. Thus as to
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or, Advice to a God-son. 43

the Provision for a Christian's Welfare in this World. And as the Wicked at their latter End see (altho' too late) their Folly, and then Lament and Bewail their Rebellions and Wickedness against God, with great Horrour and Consternation of Heart, and then not being able to fly from themselves, lie down in Sorrow, forewarning others of their Follies. So, on the other Hand, these faithful Disciples of their blessed Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, when they come to die, if you should then ask them whether ever they repented of their faithful serving God, in walking in that seeming streight and narrow Way of Vertue and true Christianity? And they will presently tell you, That he was the best Master in the World,

44 *A New-Years Gift :*

World, and that his Service was perfect Freedom; That there is no such Life of Pleasure, Joy and Satisfaction, and true Tranquility and Peace of Mind, as in an honest sincere Christian Life. *Ecclesiast. 2. 10, 11.* They will say with the Son of Syrach, *Look at the Generations of old, and see, did ever any trust in the Lord and was confounded? Or did ever any abide in his Fear and was forsaken? Or whom did he ever despise that called upon him?*

For the Lord is full of Compassion and Merciful, long Suffering and very pitiful, and forgiveth Sins, and saveth in time of Affliction. You will hear even the best of them bewailing much their own Unprofitableness, and that they have done so good a Master so little

or, *Advice to a God-son.* 45

little Service; and you will find them rejoicing in God, even when grim Death looks them full in the Face, and they returning him a Smile of Disdain for his Frowns: And to speak the Truth, they are so full of Joy they are not able to express it in Words, it being better felt than expressed, and what they have all along met with in their holy Christian Course. For what great Encouragements have they had daily also from their clear and full Prospect of a glorious celestial Crown awaiting for them in the other World? But this future, great and transcendent Felicity (that neither Eye hath seen, nor Ear hath heard, nor ever entered into the Heart of Man to conceive) how can they, or I, represent it to you? *O how great*

is

46 *A New-Years Gift :*

*is thy Goodness which thou hast
laid up for them that fear thee,
&c. Psal. 31. 19.*

Now, God-son, you are enter'd
into their Christian Race, and
may become as Happy as they,
if you will but follow their
Example, and walk in their
Steps, you may assuredly par-
take of their Satisfaction and
Comforts in this Life, and also
of their Reward and Crown in
the other World. Consider the
seasonableness of the time of
your Youth, which is the most
acceptable time with God, now
you may assure your self the
golden Scepter is held forth:
How pleasing must it needs be
to the Divine Majesty of Hea-
ven, the supreme Lord the Cre-
ator, to have the First Born
of his Creatures, their Youth
and Strength, their First virgin
Thoughts

or, Advice to a God-son. 47

Thoughts and Affections devoted and dedicated to him and his Service? O how rejoicingly will he now receive you, yea embrace you in the Arms of his tenderest Affections? And how may you now expect the all-powerful Assistances of his Grace, the strongest Gales of his Spirit to assist your Endeavours? Now, what wise Man (think you) who having a long and difficult Voyage to take, wherein he is like to meet with a strong Tide and Current against him, but will be very ready to take the Advantage of Wind and Weather for his Help and Furtherance in his Voyage? Now God hath assured to you the Gift of his Spirit, if you earnestly beg it of him, and make diligent use of it, both to encourage, assist and

48 *A New-Years Gift :*

and comfort you in your Christian Race, that at last you may gain the Celestial Crown.

How seasonable also will this Time of your Youth, Health, Strength and Vigour be to your self, for the easy effecting and accomplishing this great Work? Now before you have tasted the Pleasures of Sin, or however, before you have taken too deep Draughts of that poysonous and pernicious Potion of Vice, and Sin before you have contracted Evil Habits (those Customs in Sin, which are as a Second Nature) and before you are immersed in the Cares and Troubles of this Life, now to receive the Impression (on your tender and pliable Minds) of Heaven, of Vertue and the Love of God.) O, have therefore

or, *Advice to a God-son.* 49

a more especial Care at this time, of those dangerous Rocks of Ease and Pleasure, and ill Example, upon which so many are daily shipwreck'd in their Youth and tender Years; herein take the Advice lately given by a worthy Author to young Persons. *The chiefest Instances of Vice (saith he) consist in the extravagant Affectation of sensual Delights and Pleasures. The Judgment of Youth is raw, nor hath its Reason attained to any Consistency, is easily imposed upon by Shews and Appearances of things, it sees but the Surface of them; the Inclinations of Sense are strong and prevalent, and the Powers of Reason weak and imperfect, are easily fired and captivated by any thing that proposeth present Gratification*

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and

50 *A New-Years Gift :*

and satisfying its carnal Appetites. It therefore very much concerns you, not to trust to your own Judgment, but take in the Advice of wiser Heads than your own, and now to labour to mortify and subdue your Lusts and carnal Appetites and Passions, and to get the Conquest over them sometimes, as the Son of Syrach adviseth thee, *Ecclesiast. 18. 30, 32. Go not after thy Lusts, but refrain thy self from thine Appetites. Take not Pleasure in much good Chear, &c.*

Now let it be your great care to break off such sinful Customs you have contracted, especially those of lying and swearing (too much abounding in young Persons in our days.) Use not to make any manner of Lyes, for the Custom thereof

or, *Advice to a God-son.* 51

thereof is not good, as the Son of *Syrach* adviseth thee, *Ecclesiast.* 7. 13. *And accustom not thy Mouth to swearing, neither use thy self to the naming of the Holy one: As he further adviseth; For a Man (saith he) that useth much swearing shall be filled with Iniquity, and the Plague shall never depart from his House, &c. Ecclesiast.*

23. 9, 11. I pray you consider it well, and abominate and detest this horrible Sin of swearing and cursing, this blasphemous Contempt of the divine Majesty of Heaven, which in young Persons may be well looked upon as the Seed of all Vice and Wickedness in them, to end in that Plague and Curse before mentioned.

And in the next place engage and fix your Affections

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52 *'A New-Years Gift:*

strongly upon God and things above; now a quarter part of the Pains and Labour will do the Business, which you must be forced else to use afterward, if you let pass this best time; now strike while the Iron is hot.

In respect of your Mortality. How seasonable is this time to do this great and necessary Business of Life? Consider the Frailty and uncertainty of your Life, which may more especially be compared in Youth to a Bubble, a Vapour, a Flower, quickly nipt in the Bud, when least expected by your self: Death is your great Enemy, who awaits for your Life every day, be therefore beforehand with him, and prepared against his Assaults, which only can be by making use of the present time

time (which is only yours) to make your Peace with God, and to secure to your self eternal Happiness, that you may be made Holy and fit for Heaven; that when Death comes it may not be able to hurt you, but advantage you, in translating you from this sinful and troublesome World into the Mansions of eternal Pleasures and Delights above. This true Wisdom of being Religious and Vertuous, will, in short, make you live comfortably and die bravely.

God-son, you remember that saying in your Grammar, *Multum scire est vita jucundissima*, Wisdom and Knowledge is the sweetest Life of all. And the Son of Syrach, *Ecclesiast. 40. 20.* will tell you, *Wine and Musick rejoyce the Heart, but the*

54 *A New-Years Gift:*

Love of Wisdom is above them both.

Improve your Mind therein, now take Pains to acquire it : As one hath well observed, *All Men desire Knowledge, but they are unwilling to be at the Pains to get it.* The wise Heathen *Seneca* will tell you, *The greater any Man's Knowledge is the greater and more perfect is his Mind.* It's Knowledge makes us Men and not Years; and he goes on and extolleth the Knowledge and Contemplation of God, above all other Knowledge. The Knowledge of God (saith he) is the most excellent Knowledge: He is the most excellent Object; and therefore the Knowledge of him must needs be so. Nothing so much delights and perfects the Minds of Men as the Knowledge of God;

God; that's most Pleasant, and ministers greatest Satisfaction to them; that quiets and lays to Rest the Motions, and satisfies the Appetites of them, it also perfects and compleats them.

I need not recommend to you the knowledge of God and Religion, for he hath (you see) prevented me, done it to my hands: And not only get your Mind well instructed in your Christian Religion, but consider also that our Happiness lies not in *bonorum cognitione*, but *fruitione*, not in knowing but in living answerable to our Knowledge: As a great and learned Man saith, *Veritatem Philosophia querit, Theologia invenit, Religio possidet*: Religion Consists in Practice. If ye know these things

98 *A New-Years Gift:*

happy are you if you do them as the holy Scripture teacheth us. *If you love me* (saith our blessed Lord and Master) *keep my Commandments*. Let me exhort you to live answerable to your holy Christian Religion in Communion with the Church of *England* (she being a sound part of the Catholick Church of Christ) and beware of such as would seduce you from her Communion, for herein lies your Safety, to obey and be guided by them that have the Oversight of you, and are over you in the Lord, *Heb.* 13. 17. and to esteem them highly for their Works sake, as the Apostle exhorts us 1 *Thes.* 5. 13. And tell them that shall at any time attempt to pervert you, That by an hearty Practice of the Religion as
you

or, Advice to a God-son. 57

you have been taught in the Church of *England*; you find you have attained to a Temper so like that of good Men, and even of our Lord Jesus himself, as it is set down in Scripture; you find such a suitableness in it, with all the Wants and Desires of your Soul, such Helps against your Infirmities, such Comfort from discharge of your Duty, such a Fear of doing any Ill either to Friend or Stranger, such an hearty Inclination to do Good to all: As that if they should teach you any other ways they must needs make you a worse Man: Both more uneasy to your self, and more troublesome, and perhaps, dangerous to others. And that therefore you resolve, by God's Grace, to continue in the said Holy

C 5 Church

58 *A New-Years Gift:*

Church, which, as far as you can discern, by a Tryal of your own (and I am sure Practice will convince you of this) makes Men as Happy in themselves as useful to others, as they can be in this World. And that any other Communion which requires Men to practise otherwise must, as far as you understand, make them worse. And therefore you cannot but think that you have more reason to hearken to the Advice of, and be guided by your Mother the Church of *England*, and her Pastors she hath appointed and set over you, than by any Strangers whatsoever. And in this humble Submission to the Church (wherein you were born and baptized, and from whom you received your Christianity) and
in

or, Advice to a God-son. 59

in your Fidelity to her (if you should happen by this means to be led into any Error, or Mistake, as to Matters of Dispute) it will be doubtless a very venial, or pardonable Crime in you, it being in an humble Submission to the best Guide you have next the Scriptures. An Error, or Mistake arising from Humility of Heart, and Diffidence in your self, is a far less Crime than what arises from Pride and self-Confidence in Opposition to your spiritual Governours & Guides, which God hath placed, and given them Authority over you; which our Sectaries have reason seriously to consider of in our days.

God-son, Since the penning of the precedent Discourse, meeting with these following Verses

80 *A New-Years Gift :*

Verses of a late Author, something pertinent to my Discourse, I thought fit to add them to it, considering that with Youth the same Matter being cloathed in Verse may be more acceptable than in Prose.

*Do not mispend thy golden Youth,
and bring*

*The Dross of thy old Age to
serve thy King.*

*Do not neglect the Morning of
thy Days,*

*And think the Evening fit thy
God to praise.*

*God early must be sought, the
longer we*

*Persist in Sin, the stronger Sin
will be :*

*From Vice to Vertue turn, from
bad to good ;*

*The deeper still he sinks who
stands in Mud.*

A

or, Advice to a God-son. 61

A Nail, the farther it is driven in,

The harder is drawn out, and so is Sin.

None can foretel, how long the fatal glass

Shall run, or else how soon the Sand will pass.

Delay no time; that Man will shrink and fear,

Who lays the Burthen on old Age to bear.

Because the foolish Virgins came too late,

They Heaven lost, for Christ had shut the Gate.

Should we be old, are we then sure to store,

Our Souls with Grace, which we refused before.

Through Mire and Dirt, who travels all the Day,

Will hardly go by Night a cleaner way.

The

62 *A New-Years Gift:*

*The Tenant which neglects th'
appointed Day,
Forfeits his Lease, and fret his
Landlord may.*

Unto which let me add
what a worthy Divine speaks,
as very remarkable. *It is ob-
servable (saith he) that for
the most part of good Men and
Women, they are such as had
the Foundations of Piety laid
in their Youth, and very few
are found who were effectually
reclaimed afterwards.*

Doubtless, God-son, there
is nothing makes a Man honest,
upright, ingenious, useful and
truly recommends himself to
the World and Society of Man-
kind as Religion, and above all
Religions the Christian; which
truly makes us like to God.

St.

or, *Advice to a God-son.* 63

St. Chrysostom (as a late Author presents him) doth confirm what I have said herein. In one of his Homilies or Sermons, he speaks thus. *None labours so much that we should be approved Great and Ingenious, as God who made us, and therefore he doth us good oftentimes even against our Wills, and gives us many good things which we know not of, &c.*

In the next place it will not be improper to give you a short Description of Ingenuity of Mind, to let you know what it is, as a worthy Person hath described it, *viz.*

We cannot (saith he) suppose the divine Wisdom so much short of humane, as not in his Intention to assign it to purposes worthy of it, these must relate to God, our selves, or our Neighbours. In

64 *A New-Years Gift:*

In Respect of God, it renders us more capable of Contemplating his Perfections, discovering the Equity of his Laws, and our Obligation to Obedience: In regard of our selves, it makes us apprehend our own Interest in that Obedience, Makes us tractable and perswasible, contrary to that brutish Stubbornness of the Horse and Mule, which the Psalmist reproacheth wicked Men with; besides it accommodates us in all Concerns of humane Life, forms it self into all those useful Contrivances which may make our own Being here more Comfortable; especially it renders a Man Company to himself, and in the greatest Dearth of Society entertains him with his own Thoughts.

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or, *Advice to a God-son.* 65

Lastly, As to our Neighbours, it renders us useful and assistant; all these Discoveries and Experiments, those Arts and Sciences, which are now the common Treasure of the World, took their first Rise from the Ingenuity of particular Persons, &c. Now all these are Employments commensurable to the Faculty from whence they flow, and that answer its Excellency and Value, and he that so bestows his Talent gives a good Account of his Trust.

This very Description of Ingenuity is enough (one would think) to make us all to fall in Love with it. To conclude all in the Words of that excellent and wise Heathen *Seneca: Wealth, Honour and Favour may come upon a Man*
by

66 *A New-Years Gift :*

*by chance ; nay may be cast up-
on him without so much us look-
ing after ; but Vertue is the
Work of Industry and Labour ;
and certainly 'tis worth the la-
bour to purchase that good
which brings all others along
with it.*

*The most miserable of all
Mortals are they that deliver
themselves up to their Palates,
or to their Lusts.*

I could out of my Christian
Affection to you (God-son)
have said a great deal more
upon this Subject, but I am
unwilling to cloy your tender
Mind. Read now and then a lit-
tle of this Discourse as you have
convenient Time, and consider
seriously of it: What I have
herein done, is out of Sense of
my Duty, and that I might
not be your God-father for no-
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or, Advice to a God-son. 67

thing, but that you might be somewhat benefitted and profitted by the same. And that this and all other Helps in this kind, in tendency to promote your Welfare both in Soul and Body, may prove successful, shall be the hearty Prayers of your Christian Friend.

Let us heartily pray, as our Church directs in the Collect for the 6th Sunday after the Epiphany.

O God, whose blessed Son was manifested, that he might destroy the Works of the Devil, and make us the Sons of God, and Heirs of eternal Life; Grant us, we beseech thee, that having this Hope,

Hope, we may purifie our selves even as he is Pure ; that when he shall appear again with Power and great Glory, we may be made like unto him in his eternal and glorious Kingdom, where with thee, O Father, and thee, O holy Ghost, he liveth and reigneth ever one God World without end. Amen.

POSTSCRIPT.

God-son,

I Hope you will give me leave further to put you in mind (now and then by Letter, so long as you and I live in this World) of your
Christian

Christian Duty, and your solemn Engagement thereunto, and to encourage you in your Christian Race. I adjudging it to be no more than my Duty so to do. And I humbly conceive, were God-fathers and God-Mothers but careful to perform their Duty towards their God-Children, there would be no reason for the quarrelling, and finding fault with the Institutions of the Church injoining them; but the great Wisdom and Piety of the Church would eminently appear to them herein. And, I pray God, that all who have made it their Business to cry out against it, would

would seriously consider what harm they may have done, and repent of it : And that those who honour the Institution, would be careful to do all the good which the relation of a God-Father requires ; and I doubt not but a Blessing would go along with them, for the increase of Truth, Piety, and the adorning of the Gospel of God our Saviour in all things.

Novemb. 20.

1687.

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